

I certainly would believe that blind...or correction, that deafness is easily as bad and as tough a handicap as blindness. I would submit to you, Mr. President, and the members of this Legislature, as you go around these hallowed halls, time and again you will see attorneys that are blind people, but you have not seen an attorney or another professionally educated person in this building that is deaf. Total deafness is a serious disastrous handicap, and workman's comp, to date, does not treat it as such. If you have a loss of hearing in one ear, it's bad. If you have it in two, it's twice as bad. No sir, it's maybe a hundred times as bad, and this Legislature has an opportunity to recognize that in adopting Senator Brennan's amendment.

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm in favor of the idea that Senator Brennan advances of making the loss of both ears, or total hearing loss, to be a total disability. This represents a substantial change in the bill that was presented to you. I have to confess that, although I was prepared to support perhaps 358 at this stage, I would have had a tough time at the Final Reading stage on voting on that bill. However, I have no reluctance whatsoever to speak out in favor of this approach of dealing with the matter of hearing. Our Nebraska law is, at this time, woefully inadequate. Let me tell you that at the current time the loss of hearing in one ear is compensated by 40 weeks of compensation. The loss of hearing in both ears is compensated twice as much, 80 weeks, but of course there is a considerable difference between the loss of hearing in one ear and total deafness. And yet our workman's comp schedule indicates that it is simply doubling the amount of injury. That is a very, very unfair figure. I also might want to share with you that as a member of the Committee that heard this bill, everyone in the hearing room agreed that the provision with respect to hearing was inadequate and unfair. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that the loss of hearing was an unfair provision. Let me share with you some figures that I have asked for from the Workmen's Comp Court as far as the effect of this amendment. I found out about it when I came onto the floor early this afternoon. Since then I have called the Workmen's Comp Court. They indicated that last year there was a total of 18 cases dealing with hearing loss. Of those 18 cases, one was simply a first aid case. 12 of them had medical payments made for a certain amount of treatment done, and